Walton Family Foundation Awards $4.8 Million Grant to the University of Hartford and Montessori Training Center Northeast to Create Montessori Bachelor’s Degree Program

The award is one of the largest educational grants in the University’s history.

(Hartford, Conn.) The University of Hartford and the Montessori Training Center Northeast (MTCNE) have been awarded $4.8 million from a fund directed by James Walton of the Walton Family Foundation to establish an undergraduate Montessori education program at the University and conduct research about Montessori educator preparation over the next five years. In awarding this competitive grant, the Walton Family Foundation recognizes the decades-long partnership between the two institutions and the success of their collaborative master’s program which incorporates Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) teacher training delivered by MTCNE into the master’s in education curriculum.

“We are honored that the Walton Family Foundation recognizes our rigorous academic programming and the exemplary long-standing partnership that makes a program of distinction possible,” said University of Hartford President Walter Harrison.

“MTCNE is pleased to expand our partnership with the University of Hartford and to open the door to more individuals who are interested in becoming Montessori teachers through the opportunity that this grant provides,” said Tim Nee, Assistant Executive Director at CREC and Managing Director of MTCNE.

“This award to the University of Hartford and MTCNE recognizes the quality, strength, and advanced learning the partnership’s graduate level Montessori concentration program delivers today,” said Paige M. Bray, Director of Montessori Studies at the University of Hartford. “Expansion to a bachelor’s program will allow our partnership to create a research-based model for Montessori teacher preparation in the Montessori community worldwide.”

This is one of the largest educational grants the University has been awarded in its 60-year history. The funds will be used to establish the program, provide tuition assistance to eligible students who reflect a commitment to degree completion, and conduct research to evaluate the effectiveness of the new program as well as potential implications for Montessori educators and educator preparation. The grant is designed so that the Montessori bachelor’s degree becomes a University of Hartford tuition-based, self-sustaining program by the end of 2022.

“This groundbreaking collaboration between a university and a Montessori training center to provide a bachelor’s degree with a Montessori concentration is sure to be a model across the country,” said Nora E. Flood, Education Director for James Walton.

“We celebrate this innovative, breakthrough initiative because it will give more children access to high-quality, AMI certified teachers in the public sector – an important pillar of AMI’s global strategic plan,” said Lynne Lawrence, Executive Director at Association Montessori Internationale.

The partners will launch the bachelor’s degree program on campus this fall for both early childhood and elementary education with a Montessori concentration. Training with the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) at MTCNE, located in Hartford, Conn., will be incorporated in the curriculum so that graduates will earn a bachelor’s degree and an internationally-recognized AMI diploma. In addition, graduates will be eligible for Connecticut state teaching certification. The program is
open to applicants who are adult learners, career enhancement candidates, community college transfers, and incoming first-year students. Visit hartford.edu/montessori for application and tuition assistance details.

Currently, the University and MTCNE offer the only program in the northeast that combines Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) teacher training with a graduate degree.

About the Partners
The University of Hartford, centrally located in Connecticut, provides a distinctive educational experience across seven schools and colleges for one of the most diverse student bodies in New England. The University’s faculty are attracted by the opportunity to mentor, challenge, and support students as they pursue degrees in more than 100 programs in the arts, humanities, sciences, business, engineering and technology, education, and health professions. The University’s College of Education, Nursing and Health Professions prepares students to earn career-relevant degrees in deeply collaborative and scholarly environments. Students participate in real-world learning and research with faculty mentors early and often in their academic careers. ENHP partners with local, regional, and international organizations which play an integral role in the development of our students. Learn more at hartford.edu.

The Montessori Training Center Northeast (MTCNE) is a recognized AMI-teacher training center managed by the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC). The center provides AMI-teacher preparation courses in primary and elementary Montessori education. CREC opened MTCNE in 2003 in response to an urgent need of an AMI-teacher training center in New England. Located in Hartford, MTCNE serves as a central location in the northeastern part of the United States for Montessori activities by offering AMI-teacher training, program consultation and support for alumni and area Montessori schools. Learn more at crec.org/mtcne.

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